

"Serving those who served the Commonwealth and our great Nation."

2007-2

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"A Dream Come True"

Kentucky's Women Veterans Find Fellowship at First Health Care and Benefits Bazaar



Army veterans Astrid Locke and Lois Bradley

All day long, Women Veterans Coordinator Pam Luce stopped to shake hands and exchange hugs with women veterans who couldn't say enough about the event she'd organized.

"Thank you for this," they said over and over again, sometimes with tears in their eyes. "This is a dream come true."

"This" was KDVA's first Women Veterans Health Care and Benefits Bazaar, held April 21 in Lexington.

More than 150 women veterans attended the day-long event, many driving for hours from eastern, southern and western Kentucky.

Their service spanned almost 70 years, from World War II through Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War and Iraq and Afghanistan. There were silver-haired veterans in wheelchairs and 20-something veterans with the latest in miniature camera phones. They were members of every branch of service; enlisted and officers; nurses, police, cooks and mechanics; black, white, hispanic and asian.

All women. All veterans.



**More
Pictures
Pages 4-8**



Commissioner's Corner

New State Veterans Cemeteries

Kentucky's newest state veterans cemetery has been dedicated.

On June 1, the 215th anniversary of Kentucky becoming a state, the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA) dedicated Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central (KVCC) in Hardin County.

We've not just built a cemetery. We've built a national shrine.

Construction of the cemetery began in January 2006. Interments began on June 5.



KVCC is located on 98 acres on Highway 31W south of Bullion Gate at Fort Knox. It features a Committal Shelter, Columbarium Wall, 3,600-square-foot administration building and a 4,400-square-foot maintenance building with service area. It also has appropriate parking, road network, walking path and landscaping commensurate with the dignity and honor of a state veterans cemetery.

Jeffrey Acob, First Sergeant USA (Ret.), is Director of Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central.

Construction and initial equipment for KVCC cost \$8.95 million. The Department of the Army donated the land for the cemetery. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will reimburse the state for construction, and the state will pay the operating costs.

Kentucky's first state veterans cemetery opened in Hopkinsville in March 2004. By April 30, 2007, Kentucky Veterans Cemetery West had interred 503 veterans and 105 dependents, including 10 veterans who died on active duty, eight of those in the War on Terror.

KVCC in Radcliff, close to Fort Knox and Louisville, offers the option of interment in a nearby state veterans cemetery to many more Kentucky veterans and their families.

KVCN in Williamstown progressing

On a heart-breakingly beautiful Kentucky fall day, Governor Ernie Fletcher broke ground for Kentucky Veterans Cemetery North in Williamstown November 3, 2006.

"It is most fitting that we are here today to dedicate this land in our honor of our veterans," Governor Fletcher told about 400 veterans, guests and local residents on the former farm near I-75.

Governor Fletcher recalled the Korean War interview that won its reporter a Pulitzer Prize: in the depths of winter, as 18,000 Marines faced 180,000 communist Chinese soldiers on the other side of the hill, the reporter asked a soldier: "If I were God and could give you anything you wanted, what would you ask for?" The young Marine, still in the same clothes he wore when he arrived in Korea 14 days earlier, shivering on a 42-degrees-below-zero night, unable to eat his frozen rations, replied: "If you were God and would give me anything, I'd ask for Tomorrow."

"Because of the service of the veterans who have gone before us," Governor Fletcher said, "we have our freedoms, and we have our tomorrows."

Construction began at the Williamstown site in March. KDVA anticipates opening the cemetery at Williamstown in 2008. Alvin Duncan, Master Sergeant, USA (Ret.), is Director of Kentucky Veterans Cemetery North.

You can see the massive gold eagle statue that will stand at the entrance to the cemetery now on display in the Grant County Courthouse in Williamstown.

Kentucky Veterans Cemetery North is located on 99 acres off I-75 at mile marker one hundred fifty-four (154) in Williamstown. KDVA received the land for the cemetery through a joint donation from Grant County and the Grant County Industrial Authority. Construction and initial equipment for KVCN will cost approximately \$7.5 million. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will reimburse the state for construction and initial equipment purchase, and the state will operate the cemetery.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Les Beavers".

BG (Ret) Leslie E. Beavers
Commissioner, KDVA

KDVA at the State Fair

Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville

August 16-26

9 a.m. to 10 p.m.



Come See Us on “Main Street”

on the Main South Wing Aisle

between the History Mobile and the University of Kentucky

Veterans Benefits Field Representatives

Always on Duty

Displays: Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central Now Open
Kentucky Veterans Cemetery North Under
Construction
Nursing Homes

State and Federal Veterans Benefits Information

Homeless Veterans Treatment and Transition

Giveaways

And More!

Fellowship, Frie



Photos clockwise from top left: World War II Army intelligence, center, with Dr. Betty Moseley-Brown, Affairs' Center for Women Veterans, left, and Pame women veterans sharing fellowship; KDVA Commi veteran from Thomson-Hood Veterans Center at on Spirit Tent; health information, screenings and VA VAMC Director Sandy Nielson welcomes women v with World War II Air Corps veteran Vanda Bates, a



Friendship and Fun



...veteran Lois Bradley, staff sergeant with military
 ..., Associate Director of the US Department of Veteran
 ...la Luce, Kentucky Women Veterans Coordinator;
 ...issioner Les Beavers welcoming women veterans; a
 ...e of the booths in the Spirit Tent; a display in the
 ...health benefits sign-ups were popular; Lexington
 ...veterans; state representative Carolyn Belcher, left,
 ...a sergeant in communications.



Fellowship, Frie



Photos clockwise from top left: Vietnam and Gu
Kentucky National Guard veteran Franketta Zala
picture of herself in Da Nang, Vietnam in 1972; A
veteran Betty Sorenson, door prize winner of a h
KDVA Veterans Benefits Field Representatives R
Ward and Hope King; Army veteran Regina Lang
of a shredder; a veteran's children checking out a
Tent, women veterans getting health screenings
perfect spring day; finding fellowship with other
Army veteran Bobbie Smith answering questions



Friendship and Fun

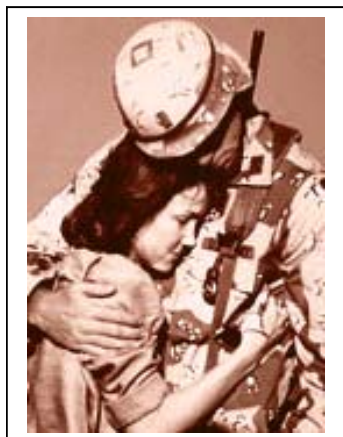
World War Army and
 znik, holding a
 Army and Navy
 and-made afghan;
 enita Duff, Eileen
 g, door prize winner
 a booth in the Spirit
 ; lunch outside on a
 women veterans;
 s in the Spirit Tent.



YOUR PHOTOS NEEDED FOR VETERANS DAY VIDEO TRIBUTE!

GUARD DUTY is again sponsoring the annual Spencer County
Veterans Day Honour Service, Parade and Static Display

NOVEMBER 10, 2007



**ALL VETERANS
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1920-2007
WWII
KOREA
VIETNAM
GULF WAR**



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Paducah Vet Profiled

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Little Caesars Offers Franchise Opportunities to Disabled Vets

An Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran who returned from combat a double amputee became the owner/operator of a Little Caesar Pizza franchise in January in Paducah, Ky.

For Paducah native Robbie Doughty, joining the Army was a boyhood dream that became “a calling.” He served as a career soldier and pushed to get assigned to Iraq after 9-11; two months after arriving in the combat zone he returned home wounded. He never lost his gung-ho spirit and completed rehabilitation in record time. He went home to Kentucky on artificial legs after only five months of training on his new prosthetics.

Last year, he received a call from Little Caesars Pizza founder Mike Ilitch. The Marine Corps veteran had read about Doughty’s injury and remarkable comeback spirit and “wanted to do something” for him. That “something” was to give Doughty a Little Caesars Pizza franchise in his hometown free and clear—building, equipment, even a special chair for Doughty behind the counter.

Ilitch, family members and community leaders gathered at a formal presentation ceremony in January. One more person was on hand—Doughty’s Army Special Forces boss, Lloyd Allard, the man he trusted his life to in Iraq and who now joins him as business partner in the new franchise.



Ilitch hasn’t stopped helping disabled vets. He created the Little Caesars Veterans Program, which provides franchise business opportunities to qualified, honorably discharged veterans transitioning to civilian life or seeking a career change. The program, coordinated with the VA Veterans Enterprise Center, offers disabled veterans who qualify deep discounts on Little Caesars franchise costs and free start-up support including favorable financing, opening support and reduced fees—a package worth up to \$68,000.

House Resolution Supporting Troops

On March 8, the Kentucky House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed House Resolution 211, which unequivocally supports the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces fighting the Global War on Terror.

State Representative Tim Moore (R-Elizabethtown), who sponsored the resolution, said, “Support for our troops is half-hearted and hollow if national political leaders belittle the very cause for which they fight. No politically motivated debate should be allowed to undermine troop moral or weaken national resolve.”

In previous days, ceremonies were held on the House Floor honoring the families of soldiers who made the greatest sacrifice of all. During this ceremony, each family was presented with a flag and resolutions passed in their loved one’s honor. After honoring those fallen heroes, this resolution advocates national unity by demonstrating genuine support for the troops and a belief that they will ultimately prevail in the cause of freedom.

Rep. Moore added, “In passing this formal resolution, the Kentucky House of Representatives voices its ongoing commitment to the truism that United We Stand, Divided We Fall.”

For Service To Country



Wanda Rickerd receives her Cold War Certificate from her son, Colonel (Ret) Tom Rickerd

“You command our appreciation and respect, and we offer our genuine gratitude to those recognized today and all veterans.”

Every quarter, THVC holds a ceremony to present decorations to residents who did not receive those that they earned. In some cases, like the Cold War Certificates received by 21 residents, the certificate was not created until recently. In other cases, metal shortages prevented medals such as Bronze Stars (received by three residents.)

Sergeant Major (Ret.) Jim Vannoy, a THVC volunteer, interviews residents, researches military records, orders the medals and arranges the ceremonies. The next ceremony will be held at THVC on Friday, June 29.

Thirty-eight veterans at Thomson-Hood Veterans Center received more than 100 medals and certificates for their service to country.

“Thank you for your lives of public services,” said Chief of Staff Stan Cave, reading a letter from Governor Ernie Fletcher.



Coolidge Combs received the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and Bronze Star Attachment, among others, for his World War II service



Frances Lees received the Good Conduct Medal, and American Campaign Medal among others for her World War II service.



John Warfield received 12 decorations, including the National Defense Service Medal & Bronze Star Attachment and the Sharpshooter Badge & Carbine Bar & Rifle Bar, for his World War II service.

Clifford Cunningham, here with his family, received the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal & Bronze Star Attachment (Triple) and six other decorations for his World War II and Cold War Service.



Cattlemen's Association Grills Steaks for THVC's Resident Veterans

On May 17, the Cattlemen's Association grilled steaks for more than 250 residents at Thomson-Hood Veterans Center.

Jessamine County Cattlemen Don Wilson, Harold Waits, John Nickell and Rob Amburgey manned the grills in the parking lot all morning, the delicious smells drawing several residents out despite the chilly weather.

One veteran who used to be a meat cutter mentioned what a great job the Bellerive Droger #708 did in cutting the steaks.

Staff from every department at THVC helped in delivering to residents the lunch trays that included baked potato, salad and peach pie in addition to the steaks.

Later, the Cattlemen enjoyed a tour of the facility, and took the time to visit with acquaintances among the residents.

American Legion Post 1056 Auxillary donated funds to purchase the steaks.



Photos by Missy Peel, THVC network technician.



Pat McKiernan Honored

Congressional Record, Dec. 6, 2006

Honoring Dr. Patrick McKiernan

Hon. Ron Lewis

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Dr. Patrick McKiernan, a remarkable public servant and advocate from my home state of Kentucky. Dr. McKiernan presently serves as Outreach Coordinator to Homeless Veterans for the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs.

Tragically, more than 1,000 veterans will be sleeping on the streets of Kentucky tonight. Dr. McKiernan recognizes that there is something fundamentally wrong when individuals who once wore the uniform of the United States are forced by circumstances to live on the streets. Under his compassionate leadership, the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs continues to work to establish special assistance programs to help get veterans off the streets and into housing or treatment facilities.

Dr. McKiernan represents his agency on the Kentucky Council on Homeless Policy, advising the Governor and his staff on homelessness and housing issues across the state. He also represents the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs at the annual conference of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans in Washington, D.C. and the Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky.

In addition to his current work and responsibilities, Dr. McKiernan is developing plans to establish the Homeless Veterans Coordination Committee to provide additional guidance and support to help homeless veterans.

Dr. McKiernan's colleagues, and countless veterans touched by his exemplary work, note his unique ability to navigate bureaucracy and successfully resolve casework with unusual expedience. Recently, Dr. McKiernan intervened in a case involving a veteran afflicted with esophageal cancer who nearly became homeless due to the financial challenges of his illness. Because of his efforts, an American hero is receiving the care and assistance that he deserves. This is but one example in a long career of helping others.

It is my great honor to recognize Dr. Patrick McKiernan today before my assembled colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives. His leadership and service make him an outstanding American worthy of our collective honor and appreciation.



EKVC Health Fair

The Eastern Kentucky Veterans Center held its 4th Annual Health and Safety Fair Wednesday March 28. The health fair provided free health screenings, and a wealth of information provided by more than 25 organizations.

One of the highlights of the health fair was the Life Net Helicopter landing in the parking lot as residents, staff and the public looked on.



Children from the day care were given the opportunity to sit in the pilots seat and in the back while having photographs taken wearing the flight crew's helmets, and with the Civil Air Patrol's Drug Demand Reduction Cadet Ken Mascot.

Primary Care Center also provided Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, and Glucose checks. They also performed bone density tests that proved very popular and caused a backlog of people waiting in line an hour after the Health Fair had officially ended.

Never Too Late to Learn New Skills

In March, the Hopkins County Library started teaching computer skills to residents at the Western Kentucky Veterans Center.

Librarian Lisa Mindosa brings laptop computers to the center every Tuesday morning to teach residents keyboard techniques, using email, looking up things of interest on the Internet and playing computer games.

"This has been a great success," says WKVC Recreation Leader Marjorie Ford, noting that five residents currently participate. "Our residents enjoy the pleasure of learning the computer."



WKVC residents learning computer skills

Photo by Kathy Son, Recreation Leader

Social Security and

The U.S. Social Security Administration has issued the following information about Military Service and Social Security. For more information, go to www.socialsecurity.gov.

Earnings for active duty military service or active duty training have been covered under Social Security since 1957.

Social Security has covered inactive duty service in the armed forces reserve (such as weekend drills) since 1988.

If you served in the military before 1957, you did not pay Social Security taxes, but we gave you special credit for some of your service.

Social Security and Medicare taxes

While you are in military service, you pay Social Security taxes just as civilian employees do. In 2007, the tax rate is 7.65 percent, up to a maximum of \$97,500. If you earn more, you continue to pay the medicare portion of the tax (1.45 percent) on the rest of your earnings.

How your work qualifies you for Social Security

To qualify for benefits, you must have worked and paid Social security taxes for a certain length of time. In 2007, you will receive four credits if you earn at least \$4,000. The amount needed to get credit for your work goes up each year. The number of credits you need to qualify for Social Security benefits depends on your age and type of benefit for which you are eligible. No one needs more than 10 years of work.

Extra earnings.

Your Social Security benefit depends on your earnings, averaged over your working lifetime. Generally, the higher your earnings, the higher your Social Security benefit. Under certain circumstances, special earnings can be credited to your military pay record for Social Security purposes. The extra earnings are for periods of active duty or active duty for training. These extra earnings may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit. Social Security will add these extra earnings to your earnings record when you file for benefits.

If you served in the military from 1940 through 1956, including attendance at a service academy, you did not pay Social Security taxes. however, we will credit you with \$160 a month in earnings for military service from September 16, 1940 through December 31, 1956 if:

- You were honorably discharged after 90 or more days of service, or you were released because of a disability or injury received in the line of duty; or
- You are applying for survivors benefits based on a veteran's work and the veteran died while on active duty.

You cannot receive these special credits if you are receiving a federal benefit based on the same years of service, unless you were on active duty after 1956. If you were on active duty after 1956, you can get the special credit for 1951 through 1956, even if you are receiving a military retirement based on service during that period.

If you served in the military from 1957 through 1977, you are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.

and Military Service

If you served in the military from 1978 through 2001, you are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings, but to a maximum of \$1,200 a year, for every \$300 in active duty basic pay. After 2001, additional earnings are no longer credited.

If you began your service after September 7, 1980, and did not complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for more information.

NOTE: *In all cases, the additional earnings are credited to the earnings that we average over your working lifetime, not directly to your monthly benefit amount.*

Your benefits

In addition to retirement benefits, Social Security pays survivors benefits to your family when you die. You also can get Social Security benefits for you and your family if you become disabled. For more information about these benefits, ask Social Security for *Understanding The Benefits* (Publication No. 05-10024.)

When you apply for Social Security benefits, you will be asked for proof of your military service (DD Form 214) or information about your reserve or National Guard service.

When you are eligible for Medicare

If you have health care insurance from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or under the TRICARE or CHAMPVA program, your health benefits may change or end when you become eligible for Medicare. You should contact the VA, the Department of Defense or a military health benefits advisor for more information.

You can work and get retirement benefits

You can retire as early as age 62. But, if you do, your Social Security benefits will be reduced permanently. If you decide to apply for benefits before your full retirement age, you can work and still get some Social Security benefits. There are limits on how much you can earn without losing some or all of your retirement benefits. These limits change each year. When you apply for benefits, Social Security will tell you what the limits are at that time and whether work will affect your monthly benefits.

When you reach your full retirement age, you can earn as much as you are able and still get all of your Social Security benefits.

The full retirement age in 2007 is 65 and 10 months, but it will gradually increase until it reaches age 67 for people born in 1960 and later. To help you decide the best time to retire, contact Social Security for *Retirement Benefits* (Publication No. 05-10035.)

Contacting Social Security

For more information and to find copies of Social Security publications, visit the website at www.socialsecurity.gov or call toll-free, 1-800-772-1213 (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number, 1-800-325-0778.)

Social Security can answer specific questions from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Social Security can provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day.

Social Security treats all calls confidentially. Social Security also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service. That is why a second Social Security representative monitors some telephone calls.

NEW TUITION WAIVER LAW!!!!!!

Governor Fletcher signed House Bill 128 into law on March 23, 2007. This bill pertains to Tuition Waiver in Kentucky, amending KRS 164.507 and 164.515. The new law **extends tuition waiver benefits to 45 months of education and the age of 26** rather than 36 months of education and the age of 23.

To implement this law, we will require applicants already using a tuition waiver certificate to complete and sign an Agreement and Certification for Extension of Tuition Waiver Benefits, which includes obtaining verification from the institution of higher learning that they have not yet accepted a diploma or certificate of completion while using the Kentucky Tuition Waiver Program.

Barbara Hale is the KDVA point of contact for this program. She can be reached at 502-595-4447 or via email at BarbaraA.Hale@ky.gov.

KENTUCKY TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM

A waiver of tuition is an education benefit provided by the Commonwealth of Kentucky in recognition of military service of certain Kentucky veterans. The tuition waiver is provided for children, stepchildren, adopted children, spouses, and unremarried widows & widowers of certain veterans.

An approved tuition waiver means a student may attend any two-year, four-year, or vocational technical school that is operated and funded by the Kentucky Department of Education.

You may qualify if one of the following is true of the veteran:

- Died on active duty
- Died as a direct result of a service-connected disability as determined by VA
- Is 100% service-connected disabled
- Is totally disabled (non-service connected) with wartime service
- Is deceased and served during a wartime

Documentation needed to apply:

- KDVA Form TW-1, Tuition Waiver Application (available at: www.kdva.net)
- Birth Certificate and/or Marriage Certificate to prove relationship to veteran
- DD214 or Discharge Certificate to prove eligibility of veteran
- Death Certificate (if veteran is deceased)
- Disability Award Letter (either VA or SSA) to prove veteran is totally disabled
- Evidence of Kentucky Residency (tax form, driver's license, utility bill, etc.)



Legislative Committee on Veterans Meeting July 10

The Kentucky General Assembly's 2007 Interim Joint Committee on Seniors, Veterans, Military Affairs and Public Protection will be held on Tuesday, July 10 at 1 p.m. in Room 169 of the Capitol Annex in Frankfort.

Committee Co-Chairs Sen. Elizabeth Tori and Rep. Tanya Pullin have committed the agenda for this meeting to deal solely with veteran and military issues. More than 25 veterans attended the committee's June 7 meeting. KDVA strongly encourages veterans to attend the July meeting.

Members of the Interim Joint Committee are:

Sen. Elizabeth Tori (Co-Chair,) Rep. Tanya Pullin (Co-Chair,) Sen. Perry B. Clark, Sen. Carroll Gibson, Sen. Denise Harper Angel, Sen. Vernie McGaha, Sen. Daniel Mongiardo, Sen. Joey Pendleton, Sen. Jerry P. Rhoads, Sen. Dorsey Ridley, Sen. Dick Roeding, Sen. Dan Seum, Sen. Katie Stine, Sen. Jack Westwood, Sen. Ken Winters, Rep. Sheldon E. Baugh, Rep. Carolyn Belcher, Rep. Larry Belcher, Rep. Tom Burch, Rep. Bill Farmer, Rep. David Floyd, Rep. Jim Glenn, Rep. Jeff Greer, Rep. Tim Moore, Rep. Fred Nesler, Rep. Steve Riggs, Rep. Tom Riner, Rep. Steven Rudy, Rep. Sal Santoro, Rep. Charles Siler, Rep. Dottie Sims, Rep. Ancel Smith and Rep. John Tilley.

Coming in the Summer Issue of KDVAGram:

Dedication of Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central

New Veterans Benefits Field Representatives

Middle School students make display boxes for THVC veterans' medals

Construction Underway at Kentucky Veterans Cemetery North

And More



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